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ABSTRACT

This report describes North Carolina's Therapeutic Camping Program, an alternative treatment process for children between the ages of 10 and 15 who have behavioral problems and/or who are in conflict with the law. The program serves children who cannot function in a normal community, school, or family setting. This report describes the Therapeutic Camping Program itself and lists the seven steps necessary for admission to the program. The criteria for admission are discussed, including appropriate ages for campers, the need for a psychological or psychiatric evaluation and a demonstration of either conflict with the law or behavioral problems, the demonstration of functioning intelligence which will allow adaptation to the camp program, willingness of the prospective camper to participate and self-concern about his or her behavior, and good health in order to participate in the active physical program. The role of the parent, legal guardian, or parent substitute and the local referring agency service worker is also discussed. A map of the four therapeutic camps in North Carolina is included, as are the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of the regional screening and referral committees for the four state regions. (NB)

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N. C. DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES THERAPEUTIC CAMPING SYSTEM

CG 022102

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CAMP E-MUN-TALEE

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DIVISION OF YOUTH SERVICES

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N. C. DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES THERAPEUTIC CAMPING SYSTEM

Operated Under Contract By

ECKERD FAMILY YOUTH ALTERNATIVES, INCORPORATED

James G. Martin
Governor

Phillip J. Kirk, Jr.
Secretary

Al Boyles, Director
Division of Youth Services

Tom Barnett, Contract Manager
Division of Youth Services

DHR THERAPEUTIC CAMPING SYSTEM IN NORTH CAROLINA

Purpose

North Carolina's Therapeutic Camping Program is an alternative treatment process for children who have behavioral problems and/or who are in conflict with the law. The program serves children who cannot function in a normal community, school, or family setting. The therapeutic camping program is an alternative to specially designed community or institutional programs.

Program Description

The campers are placed in carefully supervised dynamic groups, where therapeutic and educational experiences are provided as integral functions of all camp activities. Each group is led by trained staff who are committed to helping campers achieve their growth potential. The program is designed to help the camper develop proper attitudes, problem-solving skills, and humanistic values which will enable functioning in the community, school, and family setting.

The most vital ingredient of the program, perhaps, is the interaction of the people involved. Important interactions take place, therefore, between the camper and the staff, and between the family and the family worker employed by the camp. In addition, small group living provides opportunities for creating a partnership between the individual camper and his group.

In this setting, the camper learns how to work with others with similar problems, and learns cooperation as the group build semi-permanent living shelters, develop menus for cooking their own meals two (2) days a week, plan their own in-camp activities, and experience trips away from the camp setting. Peer group interaction also provides opportunity for promoting the task of developing responsibility and self-discipline within the group,

a major goal of the therapeutic process.

Upon admission, campers are assigned to groups of up to ten (in exceptional situations up to 12 may be temporarily allowed), housed in a minimum of two one-level shelters for each group, with a minimum of two counselors for each therapy group. The counselors provide the campers with appropriate models of healthy life-styles which campers are encouraged to emulate. Counselors are with the campers 24 hours a day and are helping friends, are partners, or play a parental role--whichever is appropriate for the situation.

The campers and/or counselors handle breakdowns in responsibility or self-discipline when they arise. There is no specific time each day for individual problem solving. As problems arise, all activity stops and the problem of the individual is solved before the group goes on to other activities. In this way, the camper comes to realize the group's concern for each of its members.

The campers return to their community approximately every six weeks to practice the appropriate behavioral skills they are acquiring during treatment.

As the campers move through the therapeutic group experience, they acquire self-esteem and a sense of identity.

During the last two or three months of a camper's stay in camp, they move from the therapeutic group to a specialized, more formal transitional classroom group, under the director of a North Carolina certified teacher. In the transitional classroom, with the emphasis on education rather than therapy, campers are prepared to re-enter the community-based educational system.

The resulting growth in the therapy group and the transitional classroom group enables them to lead a more responsible and disciplined life when they return to their community, school, and home.

Therapeutic camping is another step in North Carolina's efforts to provide specific care to children with particular needs.

Procedures for Admission

A. Prospective campers may be referred by any public or private children's services professional or individual to the appropriate Therapeutic Camping System's Screening and Referral Committee.

B. These referrals will be screened by the Committee. A copy of all referrals, whether determined to be acceptable or unacceptable to the Committee, will be forwarded by the Committee to the Therapeutic Camping System's Central Office. A copy of referrals acceptable to the Committee will be forwarded by the Committee to the appropriate camp director for review. In the event a referral is not acceptable to the camp director for admission, the reasons for nonacceptance must be acceptable to the Department.

C. The prospective camper, referring agency service worker, parent(s) or legal guardian or sponsor will be contacted by the camp family worker to begin the admission process. The agency service worker or individual who made the referral has the responsibility to complete the application to the Provider for the prospective camper.

D. Home and/or agency visit with prospective camper, referring

agency service worker, and parent(s) or legal guardian or sponsor will be scheduled and completed by the camp family worker.

E. A camp visit by prospective camper, referring agency service worker, and parent(s) or legal guardian or sponsor will be scheduled and completed.

F. After commitment to participate in treatment program is given by prospective camper, referring agency service worker, and parent(s) or legal guardian or sponsor, the entrance date will be scheduled.

G. The child enters camp.

Criteria for Admission

A. Prospective campers must be 10 through 15 years of age at intake; however, because final selection takes into consideration the physical size and/or developmental age of the child, there is some flexibility in the age range.

B. Prospective campers must have demonstrable conflict with the law or exhibit behavioral problems, i.e., "acting out", "withdrawing," "delinquent." A psychological or psychiatric evaluation must indicate the adaptive behavior patterns and functioning intelligence level. This evaluation must have been performed by a qualified psychologist or psychiatrist within 12 months prior to its submission to the appropriate Regional Screening and Referral Committee.

C. Prospective campers must demonstrate functioning intelligence which will allow adaptation to the camp program and possess

the ability to understand the cause and effect of the therapeutic and educational process they are undergoing.

D. Prospective campers must be concerned about their behavior and be willing to participate in the therapeutic program.

E. Prospective campers must be in good health or be able to compensate for any physical handicap in order to participate in the active physical program. Campers cannot be on any medication that would affect their motor coordination or ability, or impair their judgment or decision-making process. Non-refrigerated medications which are necessary and will allow campers to participate in such a program must be provided by parents, guardian, and/or referring agency. Refrigerated medications are not allowed, as the program component of out-of-camp travel for weeks at a time cannot provide refrigerated facilities.

Role of Parent, Legal Guardian, or Parent Substitute and Local Referring Agency Service Worker

A. There must be a parent or parent substitute to whom the camper can return at the end of his camp stay and for the four days approximately every six weeks. "Going home" is the program goal in treatment and parents or parent substitutes are deeply involved in the total process. Parental or substitute involvement includes:

1. Participation in an initial visit to the home by the camp's family worker;

2. Camp visit prior to and at camper intake;

3. Submitting an evaluation summary to the camp staff after each home visit;

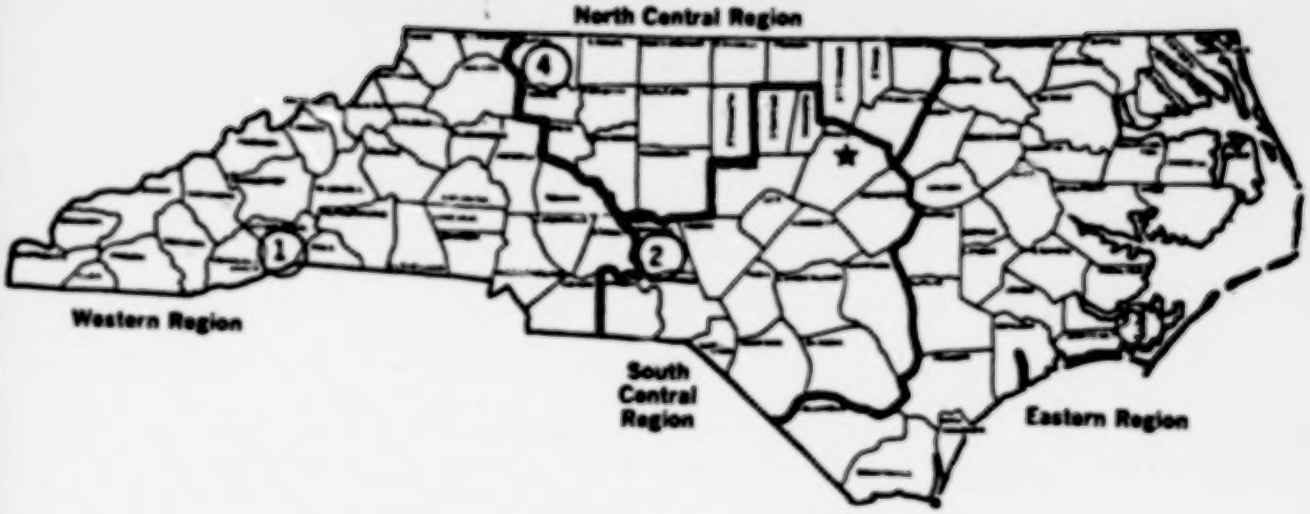
4. Participation in the Group/Family Conference every 3-4 months;

5. Providing clothing, medical and dental expenses for the camper not covered by referring service agency's eligibility or camp budget; and

6. Assisting in the determination of an appropriate graduation time for the camper.

B. The choice of going to camp is one of partnership between the prospective camper, the parent or parent substitute, the referring agency service worker, and the camp staff. Because of this partnership arrangement, families and all referring agency service workers are expected to attend and participate in all group family conferences possible since they deal openly with the progress to date of each camper undergoing therapy.

HUMAN RESOURCES REGIONS



NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENTAL THERAPEUTIC CAMPS

1. Camp E-Toh-Kalu (His partnership)
   Route 4, Box 282
   Hendersonville, N.C. 28739

   Phone: (704) 693-0458

2. Camp E-Ku-Sumee (His ambition)
   Route 1, Box 60
   Candor, N. C. 27229

   Phone: (919) 974-4183

3. Camp E-Ma-Henwu (His true self)
   Route 1, Box 45
   Newport, N.C. 28670

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4. Camp E-Mun-Talee (He overcomes)
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   Lowgap, N. C. 27024

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